

Medical Leave Act benefits for issues directly related to deployment. The bill does not extend the FMLA to anyone; it simply allows those who already qualify for the FMLA to use that benefit in new specific instances. For example, if a woman's husband is deployed for a contingency operation, she can use her FMLA benefit to secure power of attorney or to arrange for necessary childcare. Or, in a single parent situation, the mother or father of the deployed servicemember could use his or her FMLA benefit to care for a grandchild. This bill has been carefully drafted to stipulate that this leave could only be taken for issues directly relating to or resulting from the deployment of a family member.

Senator RUSS FEINGOLD of Wisconsin has introduced the Senate companion to this bill, which has garnered widespread support from military reserve, active duty, and military family organizations. I would like to submit for the RECORD support letters from the Reserve Enlisted Association and Reserve Officers Association, the National Military Family Association, the Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States, and the National Partnership of Women and Families. Others who support this bill include the Military Officers Association of America and the National Guard Association of the United States.

It is time to show our military families that we are listening to their concerns. The Military Families Leave Act represents a small measure of relief for the families of the men and women who serve in our armed forces. I ask that my colleagues join me in assisting our military families by supporting this bill.

RESERVE ENLISTED ASSOCIATION,
April 9, 2005.

Hon. TOM UDALL,
House of Representatives,
Longworth House Office Building Washington,
DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE UDALL: The Reserve Officers Association, representing 75,000 Reserve Component members, and the Reserve Enlisted Association supporting all Reserve enlisted members supports your bill, to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act to provide authority for Reserve Component family members to take leave in conjunction with a call-up.

The Guard and Reserve are contributing approximately 40 percent of the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan and are gone from home for the longest period of time ever anticipated. Many families are faced with having to accommodate this absence with often less than 30 days notice and it requires a considerable amount of time to make the necessary adjustments. Family members supporting a spouse, son, daughter or parent that is serving on active duty, should not have to also be afraid of losing their job.

The bill recognizes many of the problems encountered in the current mobilization and provide solutions. We encourage you to offer your provision as an amendment to House Report 109-016, Making Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for the Fiscal Year ending September 30, 2005. ROA and REA applaud your effort and concern.

Sincerely,

LANI BURNETT,
CMSgt, USAFR (Ret.), REA Executive
Director.

ROBERT A. MCINTOSH,
Major General (Ret), USAFR, ROA Executive
Director.

NATIONAL MILITARY
FAMILY ASSOCIATION,
Alexandria, VA, April 10, 2005.

Hon. TOM UDALL,
House of Representatives,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE UDALL: The National Military Family Association (NMFA) is a national nonprofit membership organization whose sole focus is the military family. NMFA's mission is to serve the families of the seven uniformed services through education, information and advocacy.

On behalf of NMFA and the families it serves, I would like to thank you for introducing legislation to amend the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 to provide entitlement to leave to eligible employees whose spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty in support or a contingency operation or notified of an impending call or order to active duty in support of a contingency operation.

NMFA has heard from many families about the difficulty of balancing family obligations with job requirements when a close family member is deployed. Suddenly, they are single parents or, in the case of grandparents, assuming the new responsibility of caring for grandchildren. The days leading up to a deployment can be filled with pre-deployment briefings and putting legal affairs in order. Families also need the opportunity to spend precious time together prior to a long separation. The need is no less when the servicemember returns. Reintegration and transition requires training not only for the servicemember but for the family as well in order to be most effective.

Military families, especially those of deployed servicemembers, are called upon to make extraordinary sacrifices. This amendment offers families some breathing room as they adjust to this time of separation.

Thank you for your support and interest in military families. If NMFA can be of any assistance to you in other areas concerning military families, please feel free to contact Kathy Moakler in the Government Relations Department at 703.931.6632.

Sincerely,

CANDACE A. WHEELER,
Chairman/Chief Executive Officer.

EANGUS
Alexandria, VA, April 11, 2005.

Hon. TOM UDALL,
U.S. Congress,
Washington, DC.

DEAR CONGRESSMAN UDALL: The Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States (EANGUS) would like to thank you, on behalf of the Enlisted men and women of the Army and Air National Guard, for drafting the Military Families Leave Act.

Families of mobilized National Guard and Reserve members, as well as the families of deployed active duty service members, experience many hardships. Your bill will help alleviate some of the stress involved when a principal family member is deployed. Allowing the use of the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 for those family members can greatly assist during a difficult time.

Thank you so much for recognizing one of the many needs of the military community. EANGUS will support the Military Families Leave Act in any way possible. If there is anything we can do to assist, please let us know.

If I can be of any assistance, please feel free to ask.

Working for America's Best!
MSG (RET) MICHAEL P. CLINE, AUS,
Executive Director.

NATIONAL PARTNERSHIP
FOR WOMEN & FAMILIES,
Washington, DC, April 8, 2005.

Hon. THOMAS UDALL,
Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC.

DEAR REPRESENTATIVE UDALL: Thank you for introducing legislation that would expand the scope of the Family and Medical Leave Act to allow the spouses, parents and children of active duty military personnel to take job-protected leave to take care of issues caused by the deployment of their family member.

The National Partnership was proud to lead an active coalition that fought for and helped secure passage of the FMLA. Twelve years later, the FMLA has helped more than 50 million Americans take job-protected leave from work after the birth of a child, to recover from a serious illness or to care for a family member with a serious illness. While the FMLA is a landmark piece of legislation and has made tremendous inroads in the struggle to make our workplaces more family friendly, there is still much more that can be done to help our working families in times of crisis. The National Partnership has long been a champion of expanding the FMLA to cover more workers and to allow workers to take job protected leave to address important family needs such as medical appointments and parent/teacher conferences. We also are actively advocating for policies and programs that make it easier for workers to receive pay while on leave.

Your bill comes at a critical time in the lives of our military families. Its passage will give them time to prepare, logistically and mentally, before or during a loved one's departure for active duty—without fear of losing a much needed job. For these reasons, the National Partnership applauds your leadership on this issue and supports the enactment of this legislation.

Sincerely,

DEBRA L. NESS,
President.

HONORING BERKELEY CITY
COUNCILMEMBER MARGARET
BRELAND

HON. BARBARA LEE

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Ms. LEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life and work of former Berkeley City Councilmember Margaret Breland of Berkeley, California. Serving the people of West Berkeley first as a private citizen and then as a public servant, Margaret devoted most of her adult life to improving conditions in a community she saw to be underrepresented and often overlooked. Margaret retired from the Berkeley City Council in November of 2004, and after a long battle with breast cancer, passed away on April 7, 2005.

Though Margaret was originally from Beaumont, Texas, she spent the majority of her life in Berkeley after moving there as a child with her family. The oldest of four children, she was counted on by her mother to help run the household. After graduating from Berkeley High School, Margaret became a licensed vocational nurse, an occupation in which she served for 27 years.

Margaret retired early from her work as a nurse to care for her mother in the late 1980s, but became increasingly involved in community and public service activities at Liberty Hill

Missionary Baptist Church, where she was a member. As chairperson of Liberty Hill's scholarship committee, she raised thousands of dollars every year to ensure that every church member attending college received at least \$1000 in financial assistance.

Margaret also made sure that members of her church remained informed through her work and that of others who served on the congregation's Christian Social Concern Committee. One of the ways in which Margaret first became known to the public in Berkeley was through spearheading the ultimately successful campaign to install a traffic light at Ninth Street and University Avenue, an effort aimed at protecting children crossing the street on their way to and from the church. Margaret continued to advocate for the safety of children and others in her neighborhood not only through her work at Liberty Hill, but also as the chair of both the Human Welfare Action Committee and the West Berkeley Neighborhood Development Corporation and through her involvement with the West Berkeley Area Plan Committee, the West Berkeley Community Cares Services Bank and the Community Advisory Board.

After several years of advocating on behalf of the residents of West Berkeley, in the mid-1990s Margaret decided to seek public office, and was elected as the District 2 representative to the Berkeley City Council in 1996. In her first term, she secured over one and a half million dollars in funding for projects and facilities located in her district, working to make up for funding gaps that she felt had long been ignored. Regardless of the challenges she faced, Margaret worked tirelessly to provide affordable housing, access to healthcare, police and fire protection resources and support for youth in her district. Though she struggled with her illness for much of the second half of her time in office, she remained steadfastly committed to serving her constituents, demanding daily briefings and making efforts to go to City Hall even as her condition and treatments diminished her physical strength. Margaret's devotion to serving her constituents earned her a reputation as a candid and straightforward representative of the people, someone who was truly dedicated to serving as a voice for those without the means to advocate for themselves.

On April 15, 2005, Margaret Breland's life and legacy will be honored at her own Liberty Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Berkeley, California. It is with great sorrow but also with great pride that I add my voice to all those that have joined together today to pay tribute to Margaret and the spirit of selflessness that she embodied. Margaret's commitment to and concern for others set her apart as an elected official and as a human being. The generosity that led her to serve others throughout her life is an inspiration to all of us to follow her example in giving back to our communities, our country and our world.

ELECTION WEEKEND ACT OF 2005

HON. MICHAEL M. HONDA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Mr. HONDA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the election Weekend Act of 2005. My

dear friend and distinguished colleague, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, and I are introducing this bill to expand accessibility to the electoral process for millions of hard working Americans, who at present are faced with the untenable task of balancing their familial and work responsibilities with their desire to participate in our democratic process, namely to vote.

For more than 200 years, our Nation has prided itself on being the preeminent democracy in the world. We have been the nation to which others look as an example of a healthy democracy. Yet, our rate of voter turnout reveals that our democracy is suffering from serious illness. According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, between 1945 and 1998, the United States ranked a dismal 139th out of 172 democracies in voter turnout.

True to our ideals of freedom and individuality, voting has always been voluntary. But the voluntary nature of voting is only true if all Americans have equal access to participate in this process. Many hardworking Americans simply do not have ample time and opportunity to vote. And, as we saw in the 2004 election, many civic-minded Americans must wait in line for hours upon hours for the opportunity to cast their ballot.

Our predecessors in Congress arranged for elections to be held during a time of the year and day of the week that would allow enable the largest number of citizens to vote. In 1845 Congress selected November as the month to hold elections (Election Day) because the harvest was in, and farmers were able to take the time needed to vote. Congress selected Tuesday because it gave a full day's travel between Sunday, which was widely observed as a strict day of rest, and Election Day. Travel was also easier throughout the north during November, before winter had set in.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for this Congress to recognize today what our predecessors so astutely recognized 160 years ago: The timing of our elections must accommodate the schedules of our hard working citizens. In recognition of changed times, our bill proposes to do just this. The Weekend Election Act changes our Nation's Election Day from the first Tuesday in November to the first consecutive Saturday and Sunday in November, and in so doing, enables many more Americans to participate in the most fundamental aspect of our democratic process.

Our bill acknowledges the fact that many Americans are unable to leave their jobs in the middle of the day to vote because our elections occur on a Tuesday, a day when almost all Americans are working. By holding elections over a weekend, a time when fewer Americans work, voters will have more time to go to the polls, reducing many of the long lines that form during peak voting hours.

In a time when we are ardently promoting democracy abroad, we must not forget the ongoing need to strengthen democracy at home. Only as long as the democratic process is accessible to all hardworking citizens at home will we serve as a shining example of democracy to the rest of the world.

I urge my colleagues to support the Election Weekend Act to enable greater access to the most fundamental aspect of our democratic process.

HONORING LIEUTENANT COLONEL
RICHARD "SLUG" MCGIVEN

HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 14, 2005

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I'd like to bring to the attention of all the members of this Congress some good news and some bad news. First, the bad news; Lieutenant Colonel McGivern will no longer be serving the U.S. Congress as the Deputy Director of the Air Force's Congressional Liaison Office on Capitol Hill. He's retiring after 23 years of exceptionally patriotic and honorable service in the United States Air Force. The good news is that he's going to enjoy a well-earned retirement from military duty while pursuing a new civilian career. We are certain his infectious, "we're the Air Force, we can do anything" attitude, will uplift any organization he comes in contact with. Unfortunately for us, as nearly every member of this body knows who has traveled with "Slug," we are losing one of the best liaison officers we've ever had. He is one of those unique military members who knows and understands the intricacies of Congress and the complexities of overseas travel to often-hostile environments.

During the past 23 years, Lieutenant Colonel McGivern has served in the Air Force with honor and distinction. He's a master navigator/ weapons officer with over 2,300 hours. He flew over 100 combat hours in Southwest Asia and was the operations officer of an F-15E squadron at Seymour Johnson AFB, NC. As a result of his operational expertise and consummate professional he was twice selected to work in the congressional arena for the USAF.

As we all know, we are engaged in a war different than those we have fought in the past. The war on terrorism is often a war of individuals and not a war of massed forces on a battle line. Lieutenant Colonel McGivern has contributed greatly to our success in this global war on terrorism by his individual attention and counsel to members of the U.S. Congress during trips to Iraq and Afghanistan. His insightful comments and professional skill has, on numerous occasions, been the difference between a safe and productive trip to visit our troops in the field. He's treated everyone of us like we were family and we couldn't appreciate it more. Despite the conflict and the natural frictions that develop in such an atmosphere, the relationship between the Congress and our military services has never been better. I attribute much of this to the unquestioned judgment and integrity of individual officers up and down the line—officers like LTC Rick McGivern. Whether it was responding to a constituent inquiry, providing information about force modernization or escorting our delegations to all corners of the world, we could count on the Air Force and it's congressional affairs officers to respond quickly, accurately and courteously.

As LTC Rick "Slug" McGivern departs from his active duty service to the United States Air Force and the Nation, we the members of the U.S. House of Representatives on behalf of all of our constituents, the citizens of this great nation, wish him the fondest farewell and deepest thanks for a job well done and mission complete.